

they have specific needs, then we need to know that because if these aren't going to come online for some time, maybe their needs are more consequential and they need to be dealt with in a different way.

How might the Iranians react to the increase of stealth fighter aircraft in their neighborhood? We have no analysis of that.

Finally, the timeline. When will the letters of offer and acceptance be concluded? Why was there an initial artificial deadline? Why the rush to cut short the normal, monthslong inter-agency review process by the Congress and national security professionals? Why? Why? Are they trying to lock in the sale before President-Elect Biden is inaugurated, regardless of the possible cost to U.S. and Israeli national security? We have no answer to that.

As I have said before, the United Arab Emirates has been an important partner for critical U.S. interests, including the fight against terrorism and in our efforts in Afghanistan. But according to the United Nations and to the Department of Defense's own inspector general, at the same time, the UAE also seems to be working against our stated interests in other areas. A trusted partner would be in collaboration and in cooperation with us.

Look, I wish we could have had these discussions in more appropriate settings. That is what we normally would have done.

This is, of course, not the first time the administration has subverted Congress's important oversight role in arms sales. Last May, the administration notified more than \$8 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It cited a bogus "immediate" threat from Iran, despite the fact that most of the sales, like these F-35s, would take years—years—to reach their intended recipients.

So, colleagues, at the end of the day, we must assert our congressional prerogative, not for the sake of prerogative in and of itself but to safeguard the U.S. national security interests that we are all collectively and individually entrusted to do.

We must demand answers to the very serious and very reasonable questions many have of this sale. Perhaps with due diligence, we will find that this sale will indeed bolster U.S. national security, but right now, the truth is, we do not have clarity on that most fundamental question.

Colleagues, do you really want a sale of this magnitude to go through without the appropriate vetting measures?

Voting against these resolutions sends a message to the executive branch—I don't care who is sitting there; the present occupant, a future occupant—whoever is sitting in the White House, that we are willing to give up our congressional responsibilities. It is hard to bring that back once you let it go. It says that we will not stop arms sales in the future that have not gone through the appropriate review process.

For that reason, I urge all of our colleagues to support these resolutions of disapproval so that we may have more time to assess for ourselves the nuances of these sales and the repercussions they may have in the region for decades to come, to ensure technology transfer doesn't take place, and to ensure that the national security interests of the United States are preserved. I urge you to support these resolutions to stand up for those propositions. Both are critical to protecting U.S. national security interests.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 77

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all debate time on S.J. Res. 77 and S.J. Res. 78 be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the question occurs on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 77.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 261 Leg.]

#### YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Paul	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Hassan	Reed	

#### NAYS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sinema
Cornyn	Kelly	Sullivan
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Enzi	Murkowski	

#### NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The motion was rejected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 78

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 78.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 262 Legislative]

#### YEAS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Jones	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Paul	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

#### NAYS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Risch
Barrasso	Fischer	Roberts
Blackburn	Gardner	Romney
Blunt	Graham	Rubio
Boozman	Grassley	Sasse
Braun	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (SC)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Shelby
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sinema
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Portman	

#### NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, which will be stated by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 6395), to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of December 3, 2020.)

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk for the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, an Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Roger F. Wicker, Marsha Blackburn, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1151

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 189, S. 1151. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is a substantial proposal, one that merits full consideration on the floor of the Senate with the opportunity to debate and amend to understand how many government agencies would be affected, to understand whether it merits a sunset date, to understand what the effects would be, not just on the regime of Venezuela but the people of Venezuela, and for that reason I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise to speak again today about the crisis in Venezuela, a defining human rights issue of our time.

Nicolas Maduro is starving his own people, and innocent children are dying. It is a genocide right here in our hemisphere. Every day that passes, the situation in Venezuela grows more dire.

This weekend, the world watched as Maduro orchestrated a sham election. No one was fooled by this pathetic attempt. The appearance of democracy is not democracy. Maduro is a murderous dictator who doesn't respect human rights or the will of his people. He must be stopped.

The Trump administration has taken decisive action to hold Maduro accountable, sanction the Venezuelan regime, and cut off the funds Maduro uses to hold on to power. But the United States and all freedom-loving countries around the world must do more.

As Governor, I strictly prohibited the State of Florida, including all State agencies, from investing in any company that did business with Maduro's repressive regime.

It is simple. Why would we ever use taxpayer money to support a regime that is killing its own people?

My bill, the Venezuelan Contracting Restriction Act, does the same thing on the Federal level by prohibiting Federal agencies from doing business with anyone who supports Maduro. Last year, we included a targeted version of this measure in the NDAA that prohibited the Department of Defense from doing business with anyone supporting Maduro's regime.

Now it is time for us to be clear and united in our support for the Venezuelan people and prohibit every agency in the Federal Government from doing anything that would support Maduro and his genocide.

Mr. President, I ask consent to address the Senate in Spanish.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. (English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

I stand with the people of Venezuela and will always fight for freedom and democracy in Latin America.

Mr. President, what I have proposed is a simple action we can take as Americans to help end Maduro's genocide.

I am completely disappointed with my Democratic colleague's objection to my request today. This bipartisan proposal cleared the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee with unanimous consent.

I am eager to resolve my colleague's concerns quickly, and I hope that he and the other Senator who objected before will work with me to get this done. Unfortunately, they have not been willing to meet with me to fix this and to get this done.

I am not giving up and plan to bring this up again and again. We don't have

time to delay. We cannot lose sight of the fact that Nicolas Maduro is killing his citizens. We need to take every action we can to say to Maduro that the United States will not stand and let this continue.

Even though my bill was blocked today, I will never stop fighting until Venezuela and all of Latin America can begin a new day of freedom.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I mentioned recently in one of these speeches that an identity-laundering group called Donors Trust decided to do a letter to the editor of my home State paper asserting that they were just as innocent as newborn lambs.

The Center for Media and Democracy has recently obtained the IRS form 990 for calendar 2019 for this little lamb, Donors Trust, and it has some fascinating findings.

Donors Trust took in a total of \$312 million in donations in 2019—nearly a third of a billion dollars—up from \$198 million in 2018. Of that, more than two-thirds came from two huge donations—two—one for \$150 million and another for \$69 million.

Out of the \$312 million they received, \$219 million came in two donations, and both of the donations were anonymous. Now, who makes anonymous donations of that size? Most people making a donation that big want their name on the building at the university. What is going on? Who has that kind of money to give away and a desire to hide themselves? One wonders.

Donors Trust gave out \$162 million in anonymized grants in 2019—mostly to rightwing groups. This is up from \$142.3 million in 2018. I should actually probably not say that Donors Trust gave them out but, rather, that they transmitted the funds for the anonymous donors because a donor can tell Donors Trust where the money is to go. Donors Trust then provides the expedient service of hiding the donor's identity.

So where did this anonymous money go? Well, grants of interest include \$7 million to the Federalist Society—1 year, \$7 million—up from last year's \$5.9 million. Yes, this is the same Federalist Society that has selected judges and Justices for the Trump administration.

Is it not obvious that big special interests might buy their way to the Federalist Society judicial selection table with big, anonymous donations? When you farm out to secretive private organizations the power to select Supreme Court Justices and the secretive organizations take big, anonymous donations, what else are you to expect?

It would be interesting to know who paid for a voice in selecting Supreme Court Justices, and it would be interesting to know what business they may have before the Court. But all of that is shrouded in secrecy and anonymity. It would be logical to assume that \$7 million bought a seat or two at that table; we just don't know for whom or what their interests were.

Relatedly, Donors Trust transmitted \$10.5 million to something called the 85 Fund, a Leonard Leo shell group formerly known as Judicial Education Project. Who is Leonard Leo? Leonard Leo ran the Justice-picking, Court-packing scheme for the Federalist Society for years until an expose by the Washington Post made it prudent for the operation to bring in a new face named Carrie Severino. It is a little bit like replacing a burned agent in a covert operation with a new agent.

The logical conclusion is that this \$10 million is also related to packing the courts with special interest-chosen judges and Justices, and if so, that brings the total for that project to over \$17 million, counting the Federalist Society money—\$17 million in 1 year just through Donors Trust.

Of course, once you have packed the Court with agreeable Justices, you need to tee up agreeable cases for them. And guess what. Donors Trust also transmitted \$2.7 million to advocacy groups that bring those cases, including the groups that presented to the Supreme Court Janus, the anti-labor case, and Shelby County, the anti-voting rights case. These are just two of the more infamous of the 80 5-to-4 partisan decisions giving big wins to Republican donor interests—just the kind of interests that have the money to push millions through Donors Trust and the motive to use Donors Trust to cover their tracks.

When this dark-money-funded enterprise is not busy at the task of packing the Court, it is busy propagating climate denial and obstruction. It has been at that particular scheme for years. Climate denial and related political obstruction, packing the courts, and electing Republicans are the three primary purposes of this dark-money enterprise.

To keep climate denial cooking, Donors Trust transmitted nearly \$19 million to rightwing local so-called think tanks, collectively called the State Policy Network—a group that propagates climate denial and obstruction at the State government level—and to ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, which drafts up rightwing and climate denial and obstruction legislation for State legislators. This ALEC group is so reprehensible that even ExxonMobil withdrew its support for it—or maybe they just laundered their support through Donors Trust. We don't know.

Not content with climate denial and obstruction at the State level, Donors Trust also transmitted \$4.5 million in anonymous money to eight different

national climate denial organizations. These include the Heartland Institute, notorious for comparing climate scientists to the Unabomber and sending 200,000 fake, climate-denying textbooks to school teachers around the country.

On this graphic prepared by a researcher into the climate denial enterprise, Donors Trust is front and center, right here, right in the middle of the web, and that Heartland Institute is right here, part of the network.

The other organization that it funded is the Competitive Enterprise Institute, which planted noted climate denier Myron Ebell to lead the Trump transition at EPA and usher in the disgraced Scott Pruitt as Administrator.

On a personal note, I should thank Donors Trust for transmitting \$769,000 from some anonymous donor or donors to a dark-money opposition research group called Capital Research Center, which has as one of its tasks to feed misinformation about me to rightwing media outlets. I think that is my reward for calling out this whole crooked dark-money operation. And wouldn't you know—they send out a dark-money group to defend their dark-money operation. I appreciate the attention and the irony.

Others in the Donors Trust dark-money creep show include \$4 million to Project Veritas, which cooked up deceptive sting videos in Minnesota and other States to feed the false election fraud narrative of Donald Trump and the far right, and also \$1.5 million to a beauty called VDARE Foundation, whose website is a vector for anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and White nationalism. I can see why someone would want to hide giving a million dollars to that.

Donors Trust has a tag-along entity that sends a lot of money into the same places—the Charles Koch Foundation. In fact, it is a little hard to tell where this Koch Foundation ends and where Donors Trust begins.

Donors Trust has provided significant financial support to the Koch political operation's major front group through the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, which is here on the graphic. It is like a reunion going through this research. And Donors Trust, in turn, has received financial support from the Charles G. Koch Foundation. So money out to the Koch political operation and in from the Koch Foundation. I don't know why the Koch Foundation couldn't just have given the money directly.

It has been reported that the Koch network has provided Donors Trust with most of its backbone, even to the point of being described as part of the Koch network, and the Donors Trust employees have extensive histories within the Koch network of political front groups.

The Center for Public Integrity reported this gem: "At a private Koch fundraising meeting in the summer of 2010, Donors Trust hosted cocktails and dessert for . . . a 'target-rich environ-

ment' of wealthy donors." Sweet indeed.

So when we look at this Charles Koch Foundation, we are looking at something interlinked with Donors Trust, and sure enough, there is also overlap in where the money goes.

In 2019, this Koch Foundation gave out \$141 million, up from \$127 million in 2018. For the State-level climate denial State Policy Network we talked about, it gave \$2.5 million across 13 so-called think tanks, and it gave nearly half a million dollars to that same ALEC—American Legislative Exchange Council—we talked about.

Other Koch grants of note include over \$22 million to George Mason University, whose role as a hothouse for developing deregulatory and climate denial theories is well documented in Nancy Maclean's terrific book, "Democracy in Chains." This \$22 million continues a relationship that helped put Koch operative Neomi Rao from George Mason into the Trump White House and then onto the DC Circuit Court of Appeals to do the Koch operation's business from behind robes.

Remember those special interest front groups that tee up legal cases for the judges and Justices who have been ushered onto the courts? The Koch Foundation turns up there too. The Koch Foundation has spread \$6.2 million around 10 separate amici curiae—friends of court, so-called—that showed up in a case called *Americans for Prosperity v. Becerra*. And what do you know? Yes, Americans for Prosperity is that Koch political operation's main front group—such a small world.

Why would Koch political interests want to fund amici in a case where a Koch front group is already the plaintiff? Well, let's look at that case. The "*Becerra*" in *Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Becerra* is the California attorney general, a nominee for HHS Secretary now, I gather. The case is an abstruse technical challenge to how the IRS shares tax information with States.

Why this gathering of the Koch-funded clan of front groups around this little technical case? Because the lifeblood of all this dirty operation is dark money. Indeed, today, our Supreme Court is the Court that dark money built. So the dark money operation sees a chance to enshrine dark money in the American Constitution. The dark money forces that built this Court want the Court to expand the First Amendment to protect anonymous, dark money political spending by secretive billionaires and corporate interests. This is the case where they intend to make their move. It is waiting in the Supreme Court right now. Who knows, maybe it has been waiting for Justice Barrett.

Lined up as amici curiae in this otherwise nondescript case, in the order of their Koch Foundation funding, are: the Cato Institute—I can't read this well enough to point them out, but these are inhabitants of this graph as

well—\$2.4 million from the Koch Foundation; Texas Public Policy Foundation, \$1.5 million; Pacific Legal Foundation, \$1 million; New Civil Liberties Alliance, \$1 million; Buckeye Institute, \$104,200; Independent Women's Forum, \$100,000; Pacific Research Institute, \$100,000; Philanthropy Roundtable, \$30,000; Institute for Justice, \$12,584; and National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, \$8,156. When you look at the kind of money that is being doled out, I think the Institute for Justice and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation have some cause to complain that they got treated so poorly with such small donations from such a big operation.

The gathering of that clan is not the only clue that something is up. Big players in the dark money racket, like the fossil fuel titan Marathon Petroleum and the massive climate obstructor that calls itself the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, are already objecting to requests for information about their dark money operations by asserting that such a right exists. They are already asserting that such a right exists, while the dark money schemers are lining up in this case to make that push to the Supreme Court. Wouldn't it be convenient if they helped build a Court willing to agree with them and establish this new right to dark money influence?

This whole dark money mess smells to high heaven. Why big donors feel they have to hide? Why this complicated network to play Whac-A-Mole with different groups who can show up? Why the orchestration of Supreme Court briefs with groups that purport to be separate? Why the whole scheme? It is a recipe for corruption. It prevents citizens from understanding what is going on in their own democracy. It empowers the worst forces in politics. It is the mechanism through which climate denial has been effectuated, and it is wrapping its tentacles more and more tightly around our U.S. Supreme Court.

And Donors Trust—that sweet little lamb—is at the center of the web dolling out hundreds of millions of dollars—some lamb. Donors Trust is a wolf in lamb's clothing or perhaps better to say Donors Trust provides the lamb's clothing that cloaks the wolves so that they can feed more voraciously and anonymously on America's body politic.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was listening to the previous speaker from Rhode Island, and I figure it is time to clarify a few things that are said about our President.

I know that right now a lot of people are believing that we are going to have a change; that we will have a Democratic President. A lot of decisions are being made, talk is being made. But to show you that there is a big difference

of opinion, I want to say a few things about our President just to remind people. They have forgotten what has happened. Now, I know there are differing opinions on that, partisan opinions and all that.

Right now, my very close friend from the Democratic aisle and I are going to, hopefully, have a vote tomorrow that will take place, the Defense authorization bill—the biggest bill of the year, the most significant bill of the year. Senator REED and I have an agreement on almost every element of it. And we have both come to the conclusion that it is a tremendous bill. It is one you really can't justify opposing.

A lot of things have been said that are not true, but I want to just mention a couple of things because this is a good time to do it.

We have a President who has done things that just have never been done before in terms of accomplishments, positive accomplishments. I remember 2 years ago, I wrote this little card because I was keeping track of all these good things that have happened. I remember showing it to the President at that time. He read that, and he was very excited about the way that we had composed them. Keep in mind, this was 2 years ago.

Look at these 10 things that this President has done: First of all, the big tax cut that he had. By the way, when we look at the fact that he did such great things for the economy—prior to the pandemic, we had the best economy we have had in my lifetime. The pandemic changed all of that. But he did this by looking back at history—and it was not a Republican; it was a Democrat. It was President Kennedy who had the wisdom to say, when he was working on the Great Society programs that were going to cost so much money: Well, we have to raise our revenue, and the best way to increase revenue is to decrease tax rates. So he decreased tax rates. We all remember that. While it worked, unfortunately, the President died before he could really take advantage and enjoy the benefits of the work he had done by his tax cuts. It has been tried since that time, and it has worked.

But what this President did in addition to that, he didn't have just tax cuts; he had regulation cuts. I call it the golden day of regulation relief, the best economy we have had in that period of time. They say that full employment is 4 percent unemployment, when, in fact, we actually got down below 3 percent. That was something that has not been done in my memory, and all these things happened and good benefits came from that.

There is a difference of opinion between Democrats and Republicans, and we understand that. I have always felt the best thing and indicator of success in the economy is to see how many people you get off of food stamps, and a lot of liberal friends say that they measure it by how many people get on food stamps. Nonetheless, we have 5

million people off of food stamps. That is what happened, and that is why we had the economy that we had. I hate to think of where we would be today if we had started with an average economy. We started with the best economy we had in my lifetime, and that was because of the President and the support he had from our party.

The second thing I hold up—now, keep in mind, I am from Oklahoma. We are an oil State. We renewed—during the Obama administration, there was a war on fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are coal, oil, and gas, and it was an effort to try to get it back into renewables. Someday we may have the development of renewables. They are not there now. In spite of what the previous speaker said, they are not there and available now. So what this President did was he stopped the war on fossil fuels.

As a result of that, we had—and this is in the first 2 years—a 277-percent growth in crude exports, 132-percent increase in coal exports, and a 52-percent increase in natural gas exports. A lot of that translated into the economy that we were enjoying.

In terms of illegal immigration—I know this became very controversial—the wall. People didn't like the idea of the wall. I can remember a conversation I had with Netanyahu when I was in Israel once, and he said he didn't understand how a modern State can have borders that are not secured. He said: You can't do that. That doesn't work. Well, he has now gotten that done against a lot of opposition—we all know that—in Israel.

How many Presidents—every President I can think of in my career here in Washington has said we need to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, but they don't do it. So this President just went ahead and did it. He is a little abrupt—we understand that—but he got these things done.

The WRDA bill—the Water Resources Development Act—right now and, actually, the FAA reauthorization were both booming successes. They were his efforts.

And then the judges. I don't know that it is a record, but in the period of time, the 4 years that this President has been in office, we have had about 220 judges who have been confirmed. These are all judges who have one thing in common: They really believe in the Constitution. They are Constitutionalists. In addition to that, he has three of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices.

Then, on the repeal, if you talk to anyone in business in America—this was a couple of years ago—about the biggest problem they had was the Dodd-Frank effort. That was the over-regulation of business and industry. And so he relaxed those rules, and that created a lot of prosperity, a reason for the economy that we have today, and the record employment that he has given us of 157 million jobs.

This is back 2 years ago.

Now, I would say, if you single out one thing—I don't say this critically of the Obama administration. We all have different priorities, and I have considered President Obama to be a friend. However, his top priority was not a strong national defense. He had other priorities. We all know that.

As a result of that, if you will take the last 5 years—that would have been from the year 2010 to 2015—in the last 5 years, he reduced the funding of the military by 25 percent. It has never been done before.

But that is something that this President came in and immediately—and I chair the committee, so I was very much involved in this. But we ended up with all these things that—the lifting of that and putting it back in the position that it should be.

Now, this is interesting because somebody reminded me—John Bonsell reminded me this morning. He said: What you ought to do is get a list of these things that have happened since 2 years ago. So real quickly, just to say, identifying China as the No. 1 adversary in the NDS—that is the National Defense System, which has worked very successfully. That is a program that is put together by six Republicans and six Democrats, all experts in the field.

I talked about national defense, and he stuck with that and has identified China for the problems that they are giving us right now.

He had new investments in the future. Hypersonics is a good example. After the last administration, China and Russia both surged ahead of us in the research on hypersonics. That is one of the most recent developments of modern equipment. That has worked, and we are not quite there yet, but we are catching up in the cyber world. He is advancing it in that area.

Then as far as the terrorist leaders Baghdadi and Soleimani, both of them were considered to be the worst terrorists on the planet, and he has taken both of them out.

He established the Space Force. The Space Force is something that we really needed to do not because so much that we were behind in anything but the fact that our competition—Russia and China—were in their particular space forces, and we wanted to make sure everybody knew and our partners knew that we were right there with them.

Then, of course, he eliminated the widow's tax. We remember that.

And the Abraham accords—this is really interesting. We have Arab countries right now that are working closely with Israel. This hasn't happened before. The UAE is right now working with them. And the Israelis didn't have to give up anything, so that is a major advancement that we are enjoying.

Then, of course, one of the issues we are working on right now is on the arms sales. We feel that we need to be selling arms to our allies, and we want to make sure that the whole world

knows that, as a loyal friend of ours, we want to make sure that we do for them what we should be doing for them.

During that timeframe he rescued 55 hostages in 24 countries. That is a big deal.

So, anyway, all these things have been going on—and getting tough. I know people are upset with his attitude toward NATO. He believes in NATO, but he believes that the partners in NATO need to start carrying their fair share. And it worked. It increased their share by about \$130 billion.

That is something that, when you talk to real people—when you get out of Washington and you talk to the people on the street, they say: Why are we in NATO when they are not carrying their end of it? Well, that is all changing.

Anyway, that is what this President has done. But there is one thing that is happening that I think is maybe the most significant thing that this President has accomplished. He came out with something. I don't know who thought of the words “Warp Speed” because I have had a hard time remembering that. I have to write it down because I forget it.

But he came out with something where—General Perna is a real expert and has been monitoring what is going on and getting the medical equipment necessary to defeat this thing that we have been under now for almost a year. And he said—keep in mind, this is back in June. In June, he said, by year-end—by December, maybe as early as November, but by December we are going to have the decision made and have a way to stop the pandemic that has been plaguing us for so long.

We had a hearing—and the Presiding Officer knows this because he was in attendance at that hearing—and we looked at the things that General Perna was coming up with that showed us conclusively that we were going to have a vaccine that was going to work by year-end and then it would take about 3 months after that to get the distribution going.

So we are talking about having this thing over by April. Now, the interesting thing—that happened in June, yet that is still, today—we are right on schedule for that to happen.

My fellow Senator from Oklahoma, JAMES LANKFORD, gave a speech yesterday. It was fascinating. He took a long time to do it, but he went into all the indicators that were out there, and you come to the conclusion that this plague is going to be over and we are going to be able to get back to normal. And that will be certainly good.

So I just want to mention that those things are happening, and those things are things that were on behalf of our President. There are, out there, a lot of people—I have never seen the media turn against someone like they have our President. So people don't even know these good things, but I am hop-

ing we can get this out so that people will be aware of it.

Now, back to the bill that we are going to have. I know that my partner, who is the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, is going to want to be heard concerning some of the great things that we are going to be doing in that bill. I will be doing the same thing tomorrow morning.

So this is a bill that we can all be proud of. I have never seen it misrepresented as much as this bill has been misrepresented.

With that, I am anxious to hear my partner talking.

I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

H.R. 6395

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I also want to thank the chairman for his extraordinary leadership in getting us to this point.

For 59 years straight we have passed the National Defense Authorization Act, and I think, honestly, without the chairman's leadership we would have failed this year. So he is owed a great debt of gratitude by all of us and appreciation, particularly from the men and women of the military.

Let me speak a bit about this year's bill: the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

We reached a conference committee report which was fair and bipartisan. In fact, I think the best testimony of that was the vote last evening by the House of Representatives—335 to 78, with 1 Member voting present. That is, by definition, bipartisan, substantive, overwhelmingly supported by both sides as a fair—not only fair but extraordinarily beneficial piece of legislation for the country.

You don't get that vote on something that is partisan and narrowly defined and divisive. This bill is bipartisan. Again, Exhibit A: the vote last night in the House of Representatives.

We have passed it for 59 years. There should be no exception this year. This is the 60th. And I hope we complete that and I expect we will complete that tomorrow.

And, indeed, this whole effort, like everything else in this country, has been twisted and exacerbated by the COVID virus. We have to deal with that, but we recognize that, despite all the complications, despite all of the issues that come before us, one of our most important constitutional duties is to provide for the security of this Nation and provide for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. This bill does that.

This important bipartisan legislation enhances our national security, strengthens military readiness and defense capabilities, protects our forces and their families, and it supports the defense industrial base.

This bill authorizes the active and reserve component end strength necessary to meet national defense objectives, provides a 3-percent across-the-

board pay raise for the troops, and authorizes a number of bonus, special, and incentive pay authorities necessary to retain and recruit the highest quality individuals for military service.

The conference report, as I indicated, passed by an overwhelming margin in the House, and I hope and believe we will have that same outcome tomorrow in the Senate.

Despite everything in this bill to support our forces and bolster our national security, there have been threats to veto the bill by the President. That is his prerogative as President of the United States, but our responsibility and our prerogative is to pass legislation which is sound, we hope bipartisan, and serves the needs of the Nation and, particularly in this case, the troops. And I believe we have done that.

There has been some discussion by the President of a repeal of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. Obviously that is not in our jurisdiction. It is a complicated issue. To simply, at the end of this process, stick it in does a great disservice to the committees of jurisdiction, as well as to the complexities involved in taking away a major factor in the operation of social media companies all across this country.

So, once again, I think it was wise to resist trying to insert a repeal of section 230 into the bill. Indeed, our national security and our troops should not be held, in a sense, hostage to a very specific business concern, and our legislation does not do that.

As I mentioned a moment ago, the crisis affecting every citizen is an exponential spread of the COVID-19 virus, and our military is not immune. As of last Wednesday, more than 31,000 military personnel were infected. If you add their families and Defense Department civilians, the number is over 48,000. These infections undermine our readiness, including the ability to train and to deploy safely.

To respond to this health crisis—again, the most serious crisis we have faced in 100 years, with respect to the pandemic—the conference agreement requires the Department to develop a strategy for pandemic preparedness and response, maintain a 30-day supply of personal protective equipment, and to have the capability to resupply such equipment rapidly and review the Military Health System's response to COVID-19.

The conference agreement also requires the creation of a registry of TRICARE beneficiaries diagnosed with COVID-19 and provides transitional health benefits for National Guard members and their families.

I can't think of a more timely and necessary provision than this provision in our legislation, which addresses this pandemic that faces us today.

Now, there has been one very high profile—there are several high profile but one high profile issue that is sur-

rounding the bill this year, and that is the conference agreement inclusion of the Senate provision renaming military installations that are named after Confederate leaders.

This provision establishes a commission to make recommendations for the renaming or removal of names, symbols, displays, monuments, and paraphernalia that honor or commemorate the Confederacy or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederacy. The provision also requires the Secretary of Defense to rename and implement the commission's plan within 3 years of enactment.

Now, I know the President recalls this, but this passed our committee by voice vote with one, I recall, objection by the Senator from Missouri. It came to the floor, and there were some attempts to make changes, but changes were not made. The bill passed overwhelmingly for—I believe over 80 votes—including the precise language that is in this conference report.

So we went from committee to the floor, to the conference with the same language that was not objected to significantly by anyone. I think that should be pointed out.

The senior Department officials at the Department of Defense are all open to changing these names. There is bipartisan support and cooperation on this issue, and I think it will be something that will be implemented and will be appropriately implemented.

The conference agreement also includes a number of provisions aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion within the Department of Defense and military services, including the creation of a Chief Diversity Officer within the Department and the inclusion of programs at the Department to respond to White supremacist, extremist, and criminal gang activity within the Armed Forces.

I say with some sense of remorse and regret that, unfortunately, there are some—I don't think significant numbers but some of these individuals. We have to respond to them, and we are responding to them.

The conference report also includes the Elijah Cummings Anti-Discrimination Act of 2020, which expands and enhances anti-discrimination employee protections for Federal workers.

Also, the conference agreement strengthens the Department's civilian workforce by including technical fixes and improvements to the Paid Parental Leave Program authorized in last year's Defense bill.

As the Presiding Officer recalls, last year was a major breakthrough, giving Federal employees the incentive of paid parental leave. It has been extremely well received. Now we have made sure that no one has been left out.

We are all, I believe, disappointed that, as we look at the record of all the services dealing with sexual assault in the military, they have not made the progress I think we all deem necessary.

To reduce barriers and encourage victims of sexual assault to report that they were assaulted, the conference report requires the Secretary of Defense to establish a safe-to-report policy that would allow victims to report sexual assault without being punished for minor misconduct related to the assault.

We are also concerned about the issue of domestic violence affecting our military families. The conference report requires the Defense Department to contract with a private sector independent entity to assess the Department's domestic violence program and to recommend improvements to enhance the prevention of and response to domestic violence in the military.

Let me turn to the requirements of specific military services. The conference report supports a number of programs necessary for modernization, including robust funding for the Army's Future Vertical Lift Program and long-range precision fires.

For the Navy and Marine Corps, the bill would add roughly \$3 billion to authorize a number of unfunded priorities identified by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant, including funding for the CNO's top unfunded priority, the 10th *Virginia*-class submarine in the current multiyear procurement program. It also mandates changes in the oversight and execution of shipbuilding and unmanned systems development programs—changes that should help instill more rigor and discipline within the Navy's efforts.

With respect to the Air Force, the bill helps improve oversight of the Department by requiring the Secretary of Defense to submit an annual 30-year plan for the procurement of aircraft across the services—all the services—which is similar to the 30-year shipbuilding report that is already in statute. The bill also supports the Department's efforts to achieve reduced operating and support costs of the F-35 program.

Turning to science and technology, I am pleased that the bill increases funding for important research activity such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing. It also includes several provisions that strengthen our domestic manufacturing and industrial base, including in critical sectors such as microelectronics, pharmaceuticals, and rare earth materials.

The conference report adopts a large number of recommendations from the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, which was cochaired by Senator KING. I must applaud him for his extraordinary work. They did remarkable work, Senator KING and his colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The conference report establishes the National Cyber Director position within the Executive Office of the President to provide national leadership for cyber security, which cuts across many different agencies and jurisdictions. This is one of the key recommendations, but



we have many more recommendations included in the report.

As we turn and look at the world outside of the United States, particularly with regard to Russia and Europe, the conference report enhances our ability to deter Russian aggression, maintains strong support for Ukraine, and reaffirms our commitment to the Transatlantic Partnership by calling for a strong U.S. force posture and capabilities in Germany.

The conference report also expands sanctions on entities engaged in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline and a requirement to impose sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, CAASTSA, on Turkey for its purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system.

Turning to China, our other major adversary—and as the chairman pointed out the two major features in the new national defense strategy authored under the guidance and direction of President Trump—turning to China, the bill established the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, a new authority for the Department of Defense modeled after the European Deterrence Initiative, and authorizes an additional \$150 million in funding. And I give great credit to the chairman because it was his idea, and he asked me to participate with him. But it is a great recognition of the world as it is today—China in an adversarial position—and we responded to it.

I believe this is one of our strongest bills yet on countering the threat that China poses to the United States and our partners and allies, including India, Taiwan, and other countries in the region.

With respect to countering the continued threat posed by ISIS, the conference report extends the Iraq and Syria train-and-equip programs at the requested funding level, while ensuring appropriate congressional oversight of the use of such funds.

Specific to Iraq, the conference report continues efforts to normalize security assistance to Iraq by transitioning funding to enduring authorities and not other temporary authorities we have been using over the last several years—many years, frankly.

For Afghanistan, the bill extends the authority to train and equip Afghan security forces and enhances congressional oversight. It requires an assessment of the progress made on such issues as anti-corruption, recruitment and retention of security forces, and commitments made by the Afghan Government in support of intra-Afghan negotiations. It also includes a restriction on funding to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan until the administration submits an assessment of the impact of such actions on U.S. interests.

In addition, the bill includes a provision to enhance congressional oversight of the administration's negotiations with the Taliban to ensure the

Taliban is in compliance with the commitments made on February 29, 2020, and to address current and projected threats to the homeland emanating from Afghanistan.

The key commitment is that we would be able to maintain a counterterrorism presence that would be adequate and sufficient to suppress any threat emanating from Afghanistan, and that has to be confirmed. We are still waiting for that confirmation.

I am also pleased the conference agreement includes several provisions, collectively known as the United States-Israel Security Assistance Act, to extend foreign assistance, cooperative development programs, and other support to Israel. These provisions demonstrate our unwavering commitment to Israel.

Turning to our nuclear triad, the conference report authorized the President's request to continue the modernization of our nuclear deterrent, which is quickly nearing the end of its use life, and the President recognizes that very precisely. The conference report will also ensure the continuation of much needed modernization efforts to continue to rebuild our aging National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure. The conference report does not support additional testing, as the directors of our weapons labs have assured us and certified that it is not necessary at this time.

The bill before the Senate is bipartisan, with strong support in Congress. This bill is critical to our national security, but more importantly, it provides the resources our troops need in order to do their job and return home safely to their loved ones. Any discussion of vetoing this bill undermines the commitment, I believe, that we have made to our servicemembers and should be off the table. Vetoing this bill would send the wrong signal to our forces, our allies, and our adversaries at exactly the wrong time. It is not necessary, and it should be avoided.

Let me close in the way that I began. Let me commend Senator INHOFE. He has worked this bill tirelessly, and I believe he has been fair and transparent throughout the process. As I said before, the reason we have this bill for the 60th year—assuming our vote is strong tomorrow—is because of the chairman and several others, but it is the chairman principally.

I would also like to take a moment to commend MAC THORNBERRY. The bill is named after Mac. He is an extraordinary gentleman. I had the privilege of serving with him for 2 years in the House of Representatives. He is an individual whose wise counsel, whose integrity, whose decency, and whose dedication to the men and women of the armed services is unparalleled. He is an extraordinary gentleman. I can't think of a more fitting tribute and a more apt tribute than naming this bill after MAC THORNBERRY.

I have to conclude by saying that despite the appearance we have done all

this work, our staff is extraordinary. John Bonsell and Liz King—the staff directors—did superb work. Let me recognize my staff, my Democratic staff: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Creighton Greene, Ozge Guzelsu, Gary Leeling, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Kirk McConnell, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Arun Seraphin, Fiona Tomlin, and last but not least, Elizabeth King.

Again, this Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act conference report is the culmination of months of hard work. It is a good bill. I would say, in fact, it is one of the best bills that we have had in many, many years, and it will provide for our national security and our men and women in uniform and their families. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Let me first of all say that my colleague, ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator REED, is absolutely right. I think about the people that he was praising, the staff people.

You don't very often hear people back in the real world really appreciating the time and effort that comes from the staff. In this case, the two individuals that Senator REED talked about, John Bonsell, Liz King—I don't remember one weekend that they have had off during this whole thing.

They are just workaholics. They know how significant this is. They know we had a defense authorization bill for the last 60 years, and the worst thing we could do to our kids in the field who are risking their lives is not send them the resources necessary that are in this bill to defend America.

## MORNING BUSINESS

### STOP THE WAIT ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I rise to discuss the dangerous practice we have in this country that forces people with disabilities to wait for benefits and healthcare coverage. I would first, however, like to congratulate my colleague, the senior Senator from Rhode Island, for his diligence and persistence in working to eliminate the 5-month waiting period for those who have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as ALS. His perseverance is admirable, and I congratulate him for eliminating this misguided policy for people with ALS.

My hope is we can expand this victory to eliminate the waiting periods